

Flight Times



Mesaba Airlines Inflight Department: Plans For GROWTH

Mesaba's Inflight Department, which currently employs 175 flight attendants and management staff in MSP and DTW, has risen to meet the challenge of the airline's significant growth over the past year. Mesaba Airlines' conversion to an all-cabin-class fleet has had a ripple effect through the entire company. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Inflight Department. Prior to June of 1996, the Inflight Department was relatively small, with fewer than 120 flight attendants on staff. Since that time, the department has experienced rapid growth, a new manager and the further development of the in-flight product.

The Inflight Department reports to Rich Lawrence, director of Flight Operations. The department is led by manager of Inflight, Kim Fredette.

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SAAB 340 Performance Review

Since joining the fleet in June of 1996, the Saab 340's operational performance has improved steadily. The Saab 340 implementation went reasonably smoothly, taking into account the effect that the delayed aircraft decision had on the initial operation. When the first few Saab 340As rolled onto the ramp, the aircraft was met with much skepticism and many misperceptions. In particular, there was a perception that the Saab 340A was chosen to replace Dash-8 flying, when in fact the decision to order several pre-owned Saab 340As was made with the expectation that they would replace Metro III flying. Initially, while some 340As did end up replacing some Dash-8 lines, the long-term plan for the aircraft is to replace the Metro III's lines of flight. The 340A is perfectly suited to fill this role. The 340B *Plus's* performance allows it to replace Dash-8 lines of flight without any performance problems. The cost reductions that the company will enjoy from operating one aircraft type will be substantial and will be more evident as the airline takes delivery of more Saab 340 aircraft.

One frequently made comment was that the Saab 340 is unreliable. While the airline did experience some reliability problems with the first few

Saabs, the 340s operated at a higher dispatch reliability than the company experienced when it took delivery of the first several deHavilland Dash-8 aircraft in 1992. However, the airline was not happy with the initial dispatch reliability of the first several Saab 340A deliveries and worked with Saab Aircraft to improve the aircraft's reliability. The limited amount of Saab 340 equipment in the Mesaba fleet initially magnified the reliability problems that the airline experienced. However, as the company took delivery of more Saab equipment, the airline benefited from increased scheduling flexibility similar to what the company enjoys with the Dash-8 fleet, and the operational performance of the Saab fleet improved dramatically.

The delivery schedule of the Saabs calls for Mesaba to take delivery of approximately two Saab 340s a month. The airline took delivery of two Saabs each month from June to December 1996. One more aircraft was delivered in January 1997, and two in February. The balance of the year calls for continued Saab deliveries at the approximate rate of two aircraft per month. Specifically, the company will take delivery of one Saab 340A aircraft and 23 Saab 340B *Plus* aircraft.

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SAAB 340

Performance Review

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The delivery schedule reflects an additional four units of production over the summer of 1997. These aircraft will be on a short-term lease that will allow Mesaba to increase its ASM production over the busier summer months. Three of these aircraft will be removed from our certificate at the rate of one per month from October through December.

The increase in the number of Saab 340s in our fleet has brought the performance of the fleet back to expected levels. By April of this year, for the first time Mesaba will operate more Saab 340s than Dash-8 aircraft. In August of 1997, the Dash-8s will begin to be removed from the Mesaba operation.

The performance of all three aircraft types has been monitored and compared very closely over the past eight months. The Saab 340 has improved consistently since August, with a small anomaly in December. Unfortunately, the deHavilland Dash-8's performance has deteriorated over the past six months. The Fairchild Metro III has proven to be the most reliable of the three aircraft types. However, the number of maintenance hours required to keep the Metro IIIs flying is

staggering.

The company is confident that the airline will continue to experience improved reliability with the Saab 340 fleet as it takes delivery of more aircraft and becomes more comfortable with trouble-shooting problems on the line.

In September, Mesaba and Northwest completed a survey of 562 Saab 340 and Dash-8 passengers. The survey highlighted the passengers' perceptions of the two aircraft. When comparing the two aircraft, business flyers rated the Saab 340 superior in almost every respect.

The results listed below reconfirm our thoughts of passengers' perceptions of the Saab 340. The goal of offering a seamless product with our partner, Northwest Airlines, is more easily accomplished with the addition of the Saab 340 to our fleet.

Month	Maintenance Reliability (%) For Mesaba Airlines Fleet		
	Saab 340	Dash-8	Metro III
August 1996	98.01	99.46	98.91
September 1996	98.04	99.67	99.16
October 1996	98.38	99.14	99.57
November 1996	98.19	99.16	99.15
December 1996	97.77	98.31	99.34
January 1997	99.11	98.15	99.00

Category	Passenger Perceptions Responding Favorably	
	Saab 340 (%)	deHavilland Dash-8 (%)
Seating-area attractiveness	70	43
Seat material	77	52
Cabin-lighting effect	73	53
Seat-material color	76	56
Lavatory design	53	39
Seat-cushion comfort	65	34
Seat width	48	21
Personal space while seated	47	24
Legroom	52	24
Roomy and spacious	47	24
Safe and comfortable	63	42
Restful and quiet	42	30
Would recommend to a friend	69	58
Would fly again	77	74
Overall rating	71	66

Month (1997)	Saab Aircraft Deliveries		
	Saab 340A	Saab 340B	Total
March	0	3	3
April	0	3	3
May	1	4	5
June	0	3	3
July	0	0	0
August	0	2	2
September	0	2	2
October	0	2	2
November	0	2	2
December	0	2	2
Total	1	23	24

Appearance: Uniform or Costume?

Mesaba Airlines has gone to great lengths to offer our passengers a seamless travel experience, and generally the airline has done well in this regard. However, all of us need to be conscious of how we appear to our guests at all times. As a regional-airline operator, Mesaba Airlines is burdened with many preconceived notions of the professionalism and competency of our employees. How we appear to our passengers is very important. In the first issue of Flight Times, readers learned about the concept of Perception is Reality. Passengers judge Mesaba's overall operation based on how we appear to them.

Mesaba has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on uniforms for its employees. However, there are times when we do not look our best. All of us need to be cognizant of how our appearance affects how our passengers feel about our airline. This includes pilots, flight attendants, mechanics, customer-service agents and ramp-service agents.

For our pilot group, appearance is an important factor in how passengers perceive their ability. If a pilot is in uniform with an unpressed shirt, a dirty jacket or

a hat placed improperly on the head, he or she will appear more like a bus driver than a professional pilot. These subtleties are significant, since surveys indicate that passengers believe that regional-airline pilots are less proficient than pilots who fly for major airlines. Obviously the facts tell a different story. The average regional pilot has over 6,500 hours of flight experience. However, if the pilot appears less than professional in his or her appearance, then the facts don't matter.

A pilot who wears the Mesaba uniform properly and with pride will generate increased confidence in our airline.

Flight attendants for Mesaba have the greatest opportunity to make a positive impression on our guests. Though flight attendants are on board our aircraft primarily for the safety of our passengers, Mesaba flight attendants can instill confidence in our passengers by exuding confidence and completing their in-flight announcements clearly and professionally. In addition, a flight attendant's proficiency is judged in large part by his or her appearance. If a flight attendant is not in uniform or looks disheveled, then passengers may have concerns about his or her ability to perform in an emergency situation. Flight attendants are "on stage" the

entire time that they are in uniform, whether they are in the terminal or in a full aircraft. Passengers see flight attendants as professionals, and when they do not live up to passengers' expectations, passengers lose confidence in our airline.

For our customer-service personnel, appearance is equally important. Passengers will form an opinion about agents' ability to handle their particular issues based on the agents' appearance. If hair is dirty and unkempt, the top button of a shirt is not buttoned or a tie is not straight, then passengers might think less of the agents and of the airline. Also, if service problems arise, agents' appearance will play a part in how easily the problems are solved to passengers' satisfaction.

Passengers will be much more likely to accept the decisions of well-dressed professionals than of agents who are unkempt and do not take pride in their personal appearance.

Even our mechanics' appearance has an impact on passengers' impressions of our airline. Our maintenance staff should be cognizant of the effect that their appearance has on passenger confidence. When a maintenance van approaches an aircraft, passengers have the opportunity to witness how Mesaba maintains its aircraft. The

actual maintenance act may be as mundane as changing a seat cover. However, if the mechanic has not shaved recently or if his or her hair is dirty and unkempt, passengers might infer that the airline does not maintain its aircraft properly.

When passengers buy tickets on our airline, they are purchasing a service that includes a certain expectation. In many ways they are buying a performance, and all of our employees are part of that orchestrated performance. This includes the smallest details, including our employees' appearance. In this case our employees are really in costume rather than in uniform. The minute that the associate arrives at work, he or she is on stage and should act accordingly. In the regional-airline industry, passengers have a better opportunity to witness portions of an airline's operation than would be possible during travel on a major airline. With this in mind, it is increasingly important to give each of our guests our best performance every day, and to be conscious of our appearance.



Spectrum Award Review

In the last issue of Flight Times, the Spectrum Award program was outlined for our associate group. This new program will identify individuals in our four employee groups: flight operations, maintenance, customer service and administration. The program will differentiate the east and west regions.

Spectrum Awards Awarded Quarterly

	East	West	Qtrly. Total	Annual Total
Flight Ops.	6	4	10	40
Maintenance	3	3	6	24
Customer Serv.	6	4	10	40
Administration	-	-	4	16
Total	15	11	30	120

For the program to be successful, we need all of our employees to participate in the nomination process. Please complete a Spectrum Award nomination form, found at your station, and forward it to the marketing department at the corporate offices in Minneapolis/St. Paul.



Spectrum Award Nomination Form

As Mesaba Airlines has grown in size and stature over the years, the overall quality of our associates has increased as well. While we all can take pride in this improvement, many of us know someone who sets and achieves particularly high standards in his or her work, always demonstrating the guiding principles of our corporate vision. Mesaba wishes to recognize associates who consistently give this extra effort, and we have developed a quarterly employee-recognition program to do just that.

The Spectrum Award program recognizes those associates who:

- A. Always put our guests' needs first, while acknowledging that safety is our primary concern.
- B. Treat everyone as they wish to be treated, always beginning with a smile.
- C. Always strive to do the job right the first time, with the goal of achieving excellence in everything that they do.
- D. Support, respect and inspire others, all the while "tearing down walls".
- E. Treat this business as if it is their own, never using "It's not my job" as an excuse.

If you know a Mesaba Airlines associate who deserves special recognition for his or her efforts, let us know! After all, if you don't nominate your fellow associate, who will?

To make a nomination for this quarter's Spectrum Award, complete this form and return it via COMAT to the Marketing Department (MSPXJGO) by March 31, 1997.

Your name _____ Your position: _____ Your ID #: _____ Your base (city): _____

Nominee's name: _____ Nominee's base: _____

Which of the above ideals (list the letter) does the nominee demonstrate? Please give specific examples of why he or she deserves the Spectrum Award.

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Additionally, the airline has two Inflight base supervisors in Detroit and Minneapolis/St. Paul. In DTW, Jason Reynolds joined the airline in December as our new base supervisor. In MSP, Joanne Taylor was promoted to supervisor after serving as a flight attendant for several years. These two supervisors are responsible for the day-to-day management of the flight attendants based in each of their respective cities. This includes ensuring that our flight schedule is properly staffed with flight attendants each day, as well as resolving a myriad of issues that arise in the normal/abnormal course of operation. In addition, the supervisors work with Kim on future staffing needs, FAA compliance, training issues and service enhancements. Kim, Jason and Joanne are focused on adapting to the phenomenal growth that Mesaba has experienced and will continue to experience.

Over the past year, the department has had the monumental task of adding staff as well as incorporating the Saab 340 into our operation. This was done in a short time. The addition of the Avro RJ85 to our certificate is requiring an even greater effort. The in-flight training department will work with Kim and her staff to develop and implement a new training program so that Mesaba can schedule the first regional jet on-line in June. The first RJ training class is scheduled for mid-April. To meet the increased demand for flight attendants in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Kim and her staff will have to hire additional flight attendants. The

Inflight management staff and in-flight training department for Mesaba spent a week with Crossair personnel building an RJ in-flight program designed specifically for Mesaba Airlines.

When comparing the changes in the in-flight training program for the Saab or Dash-8 to the current regional jet, there are several key differences. In the recent past, according to Lynn Pink, the agenda for a new-hire flight attendant had been three weeks in the classroom on turbo-prop aircraft procedures and then a one-day transition class for Saab equipment. The regional jet, however, requires an eight-day transition class added to the original new-hire program. New-hire bids will not be a factor for the first several jets because schedules will be bid by seniority. Senior MSP-based flight attendants will have the first option to bid flight lines on the Avro RJ85.

Although most of the new technical in-flight aircraft procedures have a basis with Crossair, Mesaba is utilizing its partnership with Northwest Airlines to enhance the in-flight portion of the RJ program. For example, the in-flight service procedures for First Class and Coach Class will mirror those of Northwest Airlines. In addition, clerical forms, emergency procedures and crew division of duties are all based on current Northwest practices. The mirroring of

practices, forms and emergency procedures will assist Mesaba in its goal of offering a seamless Northwest Airlines product.

In order for the implementation process to start in mid-April, the training agenda includes expanding the in-flight training staff under the direction of Darlene Radloff, director of Corporate Education. This program, coordinated by Tracy Cornwell and Lynn Pink, allows current active-bidding flight attendants to take part in the overall training process. Trainers who qualify earn a certification from Mesaba based on current FAA regulations and can

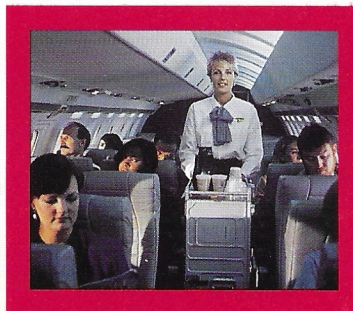
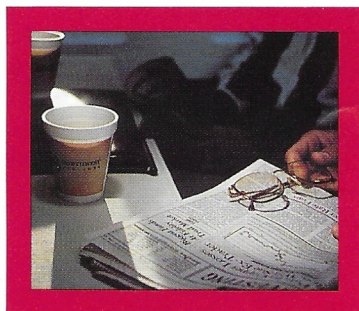
participate in the training agenda on a yearly requalifying basis. These part-time or full-time instructors are actively monitored, and recurrent workshops help keep the instructors updated on procedures. In addition, select team members help utilize the new Crossair-sponsored agenda for all incoming flight-attendant trainees.

Mesaba's preliminary steps in developing the training syllabus for the RJ85 are well underway. In August 1996, Mesaba sent representatives to Basel, Switzerland, to acquire and observe the Customer Service and In-flight Service Training modules for Crossair, one of the most respected regional airlines in the world. Lynn Pink, manager of Mesaba in-flight training, commented on the Crossair experience. "We wanted to understand their entire in-flight product and how to consistently deliver a similar level of service tailored to our operating environment." Ultimately, Mesaba received a superior training curriculum and grasped the importance of presentation and delivery of the in-flight product. In addition, in January 1997, Mesaba returned to Crossair, a current European operator of the Avro RJ85, to learn the intricate details and procedures for the aircraft. Mesaba was fortunate to work with one of the best regional airlines in the world and one with exemplary in-flight service. Mesaba Airlines' Inflight Department took what it learned and developed a program that will offer our passengers a safe and comfortable product and a seamless travel experience with our partner, Northwest Airlines.

Although this department has seen some incredible changes, the staff at hand meets the challenges every day. In today's intensely

competitive regional-airline environment, improving and developing skills to serve our guests' needs better will put us well above other regional airlines. The Inflight Department has an integral role in the challenge of developing a quality

Mesaba product, especially when each flight attendant is one of the first impressions of our airline.



The Nerve Center of Mesaba Airlines

Mesaba Airlines' network sprawls over a 16-state region and across two time zones. The airline's dual-hub system is managed out of our System Operations Control center (SOC) in Minneapolis/St. Paul, which is located on the third floor of the corporate offices. The SOC is responsible for dispatching the more than 425 departures that Mesaba offers every day. Since 1982, the airline has operated under an FAA Part 121 operations certificate, which requires Mesaba to dispatch all of its flights with FAA-licensed dispatchers.

The SOC has experienced a metamorphosis over the past five months, with a significant increase in technology to support the airline's growing operation. Mesaba Airlines now has a more cohesive working relationship with Northwest Airlines in the operational-control arena. Specifically, now Mesaba coordinates which flights operate during periods of irregular operations. This is done to minimize the effect of weather systems on the combined network. Led by the director of the System Operations Control center, Wayne Heller, the SOC is staffed from 4:30 a.m. (CT) to 12:00 midnight during regular operations.

Mesaba Airlines has invested hundreds of thousands of dollars to take advantage of the technology that is now available to airlines. The first phase of the upgrade calls for dispatchers to have a graphical interface of the aircraft assigned to particular dispatchers. Additionally, each dispatcher now has full-color weather radar at his or her fingertips through the Kavouras system that has been integrated into a new computer

platform. In the past, the SOC had one weather-radar monitor, and dispatchers had to share the system. Now dispatchers can toggle between several dispatch systems, including FlightTrac, Kavouras Doppler full-color weather radar, and PARS. The SOC also has a new flight-management system that uses a software platform developed by David Bourneman & Associates. This system is popular with many airlines across the country. The technology is some of the most advanced in the industry and is quite similar to the systems employed by our partner, Northwest Airlines.

The second phase of the upgrade to the SOC computer system will include bringing on-line a new flight-planning system that will use more-sophisticated technologies. The old system utilized a preprogrammed set fuel-burn level for our system and offered minimal Upper Winds Aloft data. The new system will use actual performance tables supplied by the aircraft manufacturers organized by aircraft. This will give Mesaba realistic fuel-burn information on which the airline can rely. This new system also offers a more-sophisticated means of using Upper Winds data. "Grib code winds," as they are referred to, are significantly more accurate than the data that the airline uses today. This feature will allow Mesaba to better use the winds to the airline's advantage in flight. Wayne Heller, director of the System Operations Control center, in conjunction with Jeff Olander, the airline's director of Management Information Systems, developed the platform for this advanced system for Mesaba Airlines. Wayne Heller commented on the upgrades to the system and how

Mesaba will use it to its fullest potential. "I am very pleased that we have been able to build a system that will allow Mesaba to meet and exceed its operational goals. The computer upgrade is an important part of the success of the SOC. However, the team that makes up our dispatch center is one of the best I have had the pleasure of working with. The dispatch group averages over seven years of dispatch experience, which is unrivaled in the regional airline industry."

Wayne Heller and Scott Durgin, the airline's new vice president of customer service, have developed a plan for the airline to follow during irregular operations due to weather. The plan calls for Mesaba to thin its schedule to allow for a more manageable operation. The program focuses on flights that have protection, thus allowing Mesaba to operate without inconveniencing as many passengers. The SOC, in conjunction with customer service, reduces the schedule to a level of manageability. The airline has used this program twice since late January, with excellent results. Mesaba retained a majority of the passengers while operating a more on-time product during irregular operations.

The improvements in which the airline is investing will help Mesaba meet its goal of being a world-class regional airline. As the nerve center of Mesaba Airlines, the SOC will play an increasingly important role as our airline grows and expands in the next century.

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